REMARKS

Claims 1-17 and 20-29 are pending. Claims 1, 9, 10 and 26 are currently amended. Claims 28 and 29 are new. No new matter has been introduced.

In the response to the previous amendment, the Examiner acknowledged that Applicant did not view the prior art as disclosing the assigning of constant confidence values. The Examiner indicated that "constant confidence values" could be interpreted broadly. The Examiner is thanked for providing a concise statement of his concerns. It is believed that the amendments to the claims obviate the Examiner's concerns.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 10-13, 15, 16, 20-22, 26 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(e) as anticipated by Reshef (US 6,529,559). The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 9, as amended, recite, "mapping each of the symbols to a plurality of data bits; assigning to each bit in a symbol a confidence value determined from constant values which are based on the mapping; and effecting convolutional decoding of a bit stream associated with the assigned confidence values." The Examiner contends that Reshef discloses assigning soft confidence values to bits because Reshef discloses assigning confidence values to symbols and a soft symbol to soft bit converter. (See Office Action at 2). Assuming the Examiner's characterization of Reshef is correct, Reshef does not disclose "confidence values determined from constant values which are based on the mapping" as recited. Claims 2-8, 20, 24 28 and 29 depend from claim 1, and claims 22 and 23 depend from claim 9, and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependencies. Accordingly, claims 1-9, 20, 22-24, 28 and 29 are not anticipated by Reshef because Reshef does not disclose confidence values determined from constant values which are based on the mapping.

Independent claim 10, as amended, recites, "mapping means for mapping each symbol to a plurality of bits and for assigning to each bit in a symbol a confidence value determined from constant values which are based on the mapping; and means for effecting convolutional decoding of a bit stream associated with the assigned confidence values." Reshef does not disclose "assigning to each bit in a symbol a confidence value determined from constant

values which are based on the mapping," as recited. Claims 11-17, 21 and 25 depend from claim 10 and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependencies. Accordingly, claims 10-17, 21 and 25 are not anticipated by Reshef.

Independent claim 26, as amended, recites, "a symbol mapper configured to map each symbol to a respective plurality of bits and to assign to each bit in a symbol a confidence value determined from constant values which are based on the mapping; and a convolutional decoder configured to decode a bit stream associated with the assigned confidence values." Reshef does not disclose "a symbol mapper configured ... to assign to each bit in a symbol a confidence value determined from constant values which are based on the mapping," as recited. Claim 27 depends from claim 26. Accordingly, claims 26 and 27 are not anticipated by Reshef.

The Examiner rejected claims 5 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as rendered obvious over Reshef in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,826,242 issued to Ojard; claims 8 and 17 as obvious over Reshef without citing a secondary reference; and claims 23-25 as obvious over Reshef in view of Gu (US Pub. 2002/0085651). Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections. The Examiner does not contend that Ojard or Gu supply the teachings missing from Reshef and discussed above respectively with regard to independent claims 1, 9 and 10. Accordingly, claims 5, 8 and 24 (which depend from claim 1), claim 23 (which depends from claim 9) and claims 14, 17 and 25 (which depend from claim 10) are not rendered obvious by Reshef, alone or in combination with Ojard.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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